Speech by Mr. Don Martina, Movimiento Antiyas Nobo.

It is a great honour and privilege for me as Political Leader of M.A.N. to address this distinguished gathering here today on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the M.E.P., a sister party of a sister island.

First of all our sincere congratulations to the Board and Members of the M.E.P. In particular our sincere congratulations to the Leader of M.E.P. our amigu i luchado inkansabel, Betico Croes.

Betico Croes established indisputably and for all time, the reality of modern Aruban thinking. He was and is steadfast and resolute in the pursuit of the objectives of his party no matter how great the pressures or intimidating the circumstances. He has created a tradition of political leadership which will be a source of great strenght and inspiration to his people and for generations to come. He taught them selfconfidence and introduced to them the way and means of common purposes and solidarity.

Betico, I wish you "komo amigu den lucha" in this difficult times, strenght and wisdom.

Secondly, with your permission I would like to use this opportunity to express once again on behalf of my party our sincere gratitude to Bureau Members of the Socialist International and all Member Parties for having accepted our Party as a consultative member.

The objectives of the Socialist International and the objectives of our Party M.A.N., are basically the same.

That is to work:
For a world of peace and freedom,
For a world in which the exploitation and enslavement of men by men and peoples by peoples is unknown,
For a world in which the development of the individual personality is the basis for the fruitful development of mankind.

It is universally recognized that the ultimate objective of development must be to bring about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual and bestow benefits on all.
We have therefore to set priorities to be reached not only in the immediate future but for the generation to come after we have laid down our task.

But to achieve any sort of long range development we must have a vision. We must know in our heart and minds what the ultimate goal is that we wish to achieve. Without this vision we shall be condemned to keep on improvising to jump from one difficulty to the next with partial solutions which in the end will not form part of a fabric, a total vision and therefore collapse as soon as new and unforeseen difficulties appear.

Today when I speak to you about the economic development of micro-states, I touch upon one of the greatest problems, that confronts my native island and its people. A problem that goes back into the history of our people not only in years but in terms of centuries.

And it is not a problem that touches my island alone.

Virtually all the islands of the Caribbean face one or more of the aspects I am going to speak about.
I feel that it may be useful to highlight certain aspects of my island's historical development before proceeding any further.

- When Curacao was invaded it was a densely wooded island. Scarcely a century later all its magnificent trees had been felled.

- When the Dutch captures Curacao it was primarily for its salt. It was specifically stated in the charter of the West Indian Company that the island was to be given to them for the sole reason of obtaining this precious commodity.

Point is that theWest-Indies Company was the first Private Corporation to hold the destiny of this island in its hand.

- Curacao with its magnificent natural harbour attracted commerce and has been dominated for centuries by a commercial elite and plantocracy, who together introduced a system of benevolent paternalism.

- A drastic change was introduced in our social fabric with the establishment of Shell-Oil in Curacao. The company not only dealt in oil but became also one of the biggest land-owners on the island.

Point is plantation-oil had conquered plantation salt.

When Shell in the late 1950's and 60's started to economise on workers and put thousands of our people on the street, a disaster was bound to happen. There was no way back and there was no future. So the people in a frenzy of desperation, which they themselves never analysed, rose in rebellion against a cruel fate.

Point is that our past economic development failed and social progress are the common birthrights of us all.

Point is that Economic Development has a hollow ring for those who are denied, or believe they are denied, a fair share of the good things of life.

Thus to make economic development truly succeed a totally new vision is needed.
The vision, that is, that economic development should imply economic growth social justice and self-reliance.

- Economic growth because poverty is progressively reduced only as productivity increases and expansion of the economy takes places and part of its surplus can be made available for the improvement of social, cultural and economic conditions of the people, that is for an increase in general welfare.

- Social Justice, because every individual has the right to a social life, and the right to emancipation provided that such does not impinge upon the right of his neighbour to the same.

The economic development process should hence foster freedom and dignity, economic security and equal opportunity.

- Self- reliance because the people themselves should be the master of their destiny. They should not be dominated by foreign economic, political or military powers.
That is thus to say that their choices and decisions should be made in freedom.

The question then is how to go about implementing a succesful development strategy considering the limited opportunities and the contraints which micro-states must generally face.

Because thought without practice is empty and practice without thought is blind.

The crucial issue of our time is how to initiate and guide a development process free of its present sources of friction and discontent?

In the case of micro-states, there are some of those contraints which often act to hinder their economic development.

Let us review just a few of them.

In the first place we must make mention of the absence of a diversified resource base and the narrowness of domestic markets.
Therefore, the opportunities to achieve a succesful industrialization by means of a strategy of import substitution are limited at best.

Consequently, a great variety of goods and services need to be imported.

Factors such as these also go a long way towards explaining the almost complete lack of domestic inter-industry transactions.

Most business transactions in these tiny countries are with the outside world.

To finance development, we run against the constraint which the absence of any kind of specialized capital market in the countries possess

As a result, our dependence on foreign capital grows. The crux of this problem is not that capital comes in from abroad, but rather the terms on which such capital comes in.

The small size of the population brings also with it a limited body knowledge. To overcome such obstacles is difficult, indeed very difficult. But we must succeed.

Therefore it is necesarry that the Party Leadership plays a decisive role in economic development. Because we must organize as never before, for organization decides everything. Our strenght lies in the organization of the massa around their needs and aspirations

I would like to give an advice in the form of a Chinese poem.

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Serve them
Plan with them
Start with what they know
build on what they have.

It is logical that attempts should start, firstly, at home.

A regional development strategy is worth considering because the problems we as micro-states face cannot be solved by individual islands alone.

To those of you among this audience who hail from big country I would like to say this.
I would like to urge upon you to take into special consideration the needs of micro-states in your continuing formulation of principles for a new international economic order.
We of the smaller islands have been following your deliberations with a keen interest.

However we find this particular attention to the special developmental problems which micro-states encounter still sadly lacking in your drafts.

Let us hence be real partners in progress.

We have a common pledge to work towards the achievement of freedon and dignity for all on this planet.

It is for this, and for this alone, that we come together.

This is our common purpose and our common bond.

Aruba March 20th,1981.